

A la Vôtre!/Laurent Lebled

Profile

When Laurent Lebled found himself forced to shut down his 30+ year old wood merchant business in 2008, wine wasn't exactly the first thing on his mind. The recession had hit hard, and without any other prospects in the wood industry, it looked like he was flat out of luck. Fortunately, two childhood friends would help him find a new path in a direction he never would have expected.

Those two friends are Sébastien Bobinet and Patrick Corbineau. Sébastien quit his job in 2003 after inheriting 2 hectares of vines from his grandfather, and Patrick's story is quite similar: quitting his job at the Chinon power-plant after inheriting vines from his grandfather. Despite Lebled not coming from a wine family, having no vineyards to inherit and having never spent a day working in vines or a cellar, Sébastien insisted that becoming a vigneron would be a good fit for him. Laurent was reticent, but Sébastien promised he would show him how to do everything. It seemed like a long-shot, but Laurent took the plunge by assisting Bobinet through 2009.

The first step to founding the estate came in finding some vines and a cellar. Laurent had always been a fan of the Touraine AOC, and through friends was able to find 1.7 hectares of vines and a cellar to rent in the commune of Saint-Aignan. Shortly after the contract for the vines was signed, the proprietor of the cellar backed out, forcing Laurent to improvise. On very short notice, he was able to find a chai in Savigny-en-Véron, over an hour away from the vines in Saint-Aignan. Though far from ideal, Laurent moved things forward by renting an additional .5 hectares of Cabernet Franc on sandy soils right by his newly acquired cellar and continuing to rent the Saint-Aignan land.

2010 was the first vintage of *A la Vôtre*, a year where Sébastien Bobinet and Patrick Corbineau generously showed Laurent in the ins and outs of viticulture and winemaking. Laurent now fully helms the operation, producing sulfur-free, carbonically macerated reds. One noteworthy particularity is that he lets his macerations go a full 30 days (a "typical" full carbonic maceration lasts 12 to 15 days), instilling the wines with rusticity often lacking in many of the light, fruity carbonic gulpers made in the same style.